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ABSTRACT

The orthodox view of reading as the accumulation of isolated skills continues to dominate classroom practice. Under this framework, prescriptions for problem readers usually involve intensified drills in the same basic skills to which the students failed to respond in the first place. Prevention entails the early and often precipitous examination of students to detect perceptual, cognitive, linguistic, or affective problems and the introduction of intervention programs to deal with these difficulties via structured prescriptive activities. The newer view of reading as a holistic process of interrelated skills and behaviors has significant implications for instructional and person-centered strategies. According to this view, reading is a tool that students actively manipulate for their own purposes. Because they facilitate efficient reading processing rather than isolated skill development, holistic reading practices provide supplemental experiences for pupils responding to orthodox methodologies and alternative strategies for students who have failed in traditional skills programs. Holistic reading experiences contain maximum information for the reader--specifically discourse prose, content of inherent interest and usefulness, and tasks appropriate to the age, needs, and character of the readers. (A chart of suggested activities to promote the holistic/functional reading approach is included.) (MM)

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APPROACHES TO PREVENTION AND PRESCRIPTION/COGNITIVE: ORTHODOXY AND THE PART-WHOLE PARADOX

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"Approaches to Prevention and Prescription/Cognitive: Orthodoxy and the Part-Whole Paradox"*

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Orthodoxy:

A conventional perception of the reading process, one as defined by Gough (1972), defines reading as a linear, stage-by-stage process with (by implication) the reader as a passive responder to bits and pieces of printed stimuli which are processed (bottom-up," from letters to words to sentences and then (somehow) to meaning. Evidence in the research literature has been accumulating which appears to refute such a theory (Biemiller, 1970; Klein and Klein, 1973; Kolers, 1970; Rumelhart, 1977; Silar, 1974; and Weber, 1970).

In spite of such evidence, practitioners' perceptions of the reading and the learning-to-read process and commercially available programs of instruction continue to be dominated by views that hold reading and learning-to-read to be the accumulation of an aggregate of "basic skills," which must be mastered for dealing with fragmented but related pieces of printed stimuli before comprehension takes place. In many programs of instruction, learning such "skills" as visual/auditory discrimination, various "word-attack" skills such as sound-letter

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associations, structural and occasionally context analysis, are considered prior conditions for decoding of printed words and critical prerequisites to reading comprehension. In this aggregate of skills, so-called more advanced skills such as "Thinking" and "Study Skills," are considered essential for dealing with larger pieces of connected discourse prose and more complex academic tasks in the content area.

Orthodox Instruction/Prescription/Prevention:

Instruction and prescription (for the remediation of reading problems) under such a theoretical framework confuses "input" for "output," means for ends. In such a confusion, there is a relentless pursuit of mastery of these basic skills with an early and heavy emphasis on directing learners' attention to and drill with lower-level sound/letter associations, often to the exclusion of encouraging interactive processing which would include attention to semantic and grammatic instruction, as well as graphic. Remedial reading prescriptions for the problem reader who has not responded to this orthodox "Reductionistic/Responsivistic/Ratological (Koestler, 1967) deterministic instructional behavioral paradigm, involve an incredibly illogical if not mindless recapitulation of the very mechanistic methodologies that the youngsters did not respond to successfully in the first place. In many cases, such reading problems are "diagnosgenic;" the malady is a result of the fallacious type of diagnosis, and "iatrogenic;" the problem is generated and aggravated by the manner and method of treatment. Often the helpless practitioner will claim "they have tried every method available."

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"Prevention" in orthodoxy frequently involves the early, often precipitous, examination of children to detect whatever so-called "deficits," which might be locatable in the sensory, motor, perceptual, neurological, cognitive, linguistic, or affective aspects of behavior, and "intervention" programs to deal with these deficits via structured prescriptive activities. Ad hoc diagnostic programs for pre-school children, while worthwhile when supervised by highly skilled specialists, tend to have diagnosgenic potential if not carefully and critically monitored. The potential for prevention available via examining the reading instructional curriculum for theoretical inadequacies is not conceivable, since these materials are perceived as infallible.

The orthodox view and methodology for viewing and facilitating the learning-to-read process, preventing and/or prescribing for reading problems reflects a classic world view which has presented similar problems with conceptions that can be noted in a variety of disciplines. The view of a mechanistic world results in a disregard for human resources, personal responsibility, active individual participation, self-direction free-will and the eternal inwardness of the individual. In such a chaotic world, helplessness, hopelessness, misdirection, apathy, and finally despair is generated.

Reading as a Holistic Process:

The possibilities derivable from perceiving reading as an organized "whole" process has implications for fundamentally different instructional, preventive, prescriptive and person-

centered strategies. These notions are relatively new to the profession. When viewed from this perspective, reading is conceived as an ordered "system" involving the holistic organized activation of dimensionally-distributed, but complexly interconnected parts. This connectedness is extraordinarily more complex than the perception of reading as a mere aggregate of related pieces that are processed "bottom-up" from meaningless lower to more meaningful higher level units. This newer view perceives reading as natural phenomenon, as a symmetry, a balance, a harmony, a flux of members, with parts subordinate to the all-inclusive system in and by which they are connected. Angyal (1969), in defining the "Logic of Systems," provides a framework which could be applicable to a reconceptualization of reading.

The ultimate goal of reading from a "systems view," its end, the one the "executive" must be always oriented to, is effective/efficient communications via the printed page. Reading is a "tool," a means to an end and the individual is not subject but the person utilizes this process for some form of human existence. Readers and those learning to read, in this view, must be so committed as individuals, to such a goal, to this orientation, that when dysfunctions occur during the process, they could respond meaningfully with appropriate efforts. "Self-direction" and "self-regulation" are the basic regulatory mechanisms of reading, which, like all natural systems, is an "open" system; i.e., open in the case of reading to "mind-matter" exchanges with the printed environment. Learning to read is predicated on steady growth in overall proficiency and flexibility with respect

to the varied goals for reading, personal goals of the reader, and the environmental tasks and expectations placed on his reading. Reading as a process is facilitated by experiences maximizing the "building-up" potential of human beings. The direction of flow in such experiences is from the person by way of print experience back to the person,as compared to orthodox approaches where the flow is from print through the person an empty relative subject back to print.

In a "holistic" view, the parts within the system of reading are perceived as acting reciprocally on one another. Such "interactive" processing involves simultaneous and alternating "top-down" and "bottcm-up" processing, actions which are downward from higher levels to lower levels, and upward from lower levels to higher ones with returns/concurrence of events, or simultaneous interactions as in the case of highly effective/efficient reading. This mutual return or exchange which is hypothesized to take place in the act of reading, involves the simultaneous or alternating dynamic interplay of cognitive, semantic, grammatic, and graphic information available through conscious and willing activation of resources of an active reader, resources acting on and being influenced by the printed information provided by the writer. In the learning-to-read process, the exchanges and interactions involve increasingly more effective and efficient synchronized concurrence of multiple connected sources of information and events for utilizing the information available to extract meanings. In holistic perceptions, the reader gains control and command of this tool by systematic exposure to functional experiences with print.

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Holistic Instruction/Prescription/Prevention:

Instruction and prevention in holism, would involve the regular and systematic inclusion of holistic and functional reading experiences either to supplement (as in prevention) or replace (as in prescription) mechanistic piece-meal orthodox instructional programs. As supplements for pupils who are responding to orthodox methodologies, holistic/functional reading experiences would provide a central organizational framework for more rapid growth in reading and more effective transfer of relevant skills to ecologically relevant reading acts. In addition, such experiences should facilitate efficient reading processing, rather than accurate word-calling alone. A holistic orientation does not mitigate against the singling-out and development of relevant skills: the context, however, for focusing attention would be developmentally and personally appropriate reading situations that have highly salient skills needs.

As prescriptive techniques for those who have not responded, holistic/functional reading experiences would provide the alternative that logically is a response to molecular skills-drills programs. Print would become a "live medium" when the experiences involve utilization of discourse prose in situations functionally appropriate to what humans utilize print for, situations where social interaction around an active search for meaning is involved, and when thought and language are brought to bear in reading experiences that integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The Paradox of The Part-Whole Relationship:

A "paradox" is a condition having contradictory qualities, an unbelievable even absurd condition, a conception which is contrary to popular belief, but perhaps true. Our best intentions not only do not work well at all, but in fact, produce results which are the reverse of those intended. The Behavioristic "Atomism" underlying Orthodox perceptions and methodologies for instruction, prevention and prescription in reading, provide only a "worm's eye view" of the process. The poorer the learner does under these methods, the more likely he will receive heavier and heavier doses.

Holistic-oriented assumptions about reading and how it should be facilitated, how problems could be prevented or ameliorated, represent an opposite alternative, a "bird's eye view." Orthodoxy never gets higher than the lowest layers of the multi-leveled process. Holism can, if properly delivered, reach all levels of the process. While reading is not purely a series of separate, vaguely related aggregares of analyzable bits and pieces, it also probably is not purely an unanalyzable unit whose parts are fused together into an unexaminable whole. Bertalanfy (1968) points out, however, that the behavior of parts are different when observed and treated in isolation as compared to their behaviors when studied within the whole. Orthodoxy has dominated thinking and continues to dominate practice. It presents a uni-dimensional perspective for a complex multi-dimentional phenomenon. Prevention and prescription must first recognize the viability of Holistic theory and practice and then perhaps begin moving to supplement, not replace current methodologies with holistic approaches.

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Holistic Approaches:

Holistic approaches provide multi-dimensional person-centered reading experiences that contain maximum information for the reader, specifically discourse prose. They involve reading experiences that contain content inherently of interest and usefulness to the reader as a person and tasks which are fundamentally appropriate not only to the varied human uses of printed language as compared to the "school" use, but ecologically relevant to the age, stage, and individual nature of the reader. Focused purposeful reading involving activity, exploration, role-playing, and/or problem-solving serve as the ultimate base of each holistic reading experience and fulfill the instrumental function of reading instruction.

Following is a continuum illustrating approaches to holistic/functional strategies. As Gabriel Marcel has so aptly stated, applied to the task of reading instruction, prevention, and prescription always will be, "never at the goal, but always on the way." This is only how we view the collection of holistic strategies presented here for the fulfillment of our quest for literacy.

Toward A Holistic Functional Preventive/Prescriptive Plan

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Holistic Functional Oral Reading Strategies	Functionalized Unison Impress	Oral Auditioning for Plays/ Puppetry	Choral and Responsive Oral Reading	Question-Answer Oral Reading	Discussion Argumentative Oral Reading	Content/ Project-Centered Oral Presentation
Combined Oral/Silent Holistic Functional Strategies	Creative Dramatization	Dramatic Oral Reading	Self-Directed Prepared Oral Reading	Student-Developed Questioning/ Oral Answers	Student-Developed Question-Answer Confirmation Refutation-Oral	Oral Reading Examinations
	Language Experience Approach	Reading by Silhouette	Regular/ Systematic Individualized Reading	Guided Directed Reading	Guided Content-Centered Reading	Pupil-Centered and Subject-Centered Unit-Oriented Projects
	Impress to Automaticity	Coding with new Orthographies	Creative Writing	Student-Developed Questioning/ Written Answers	Student-Developed Question-Answer Confirmation Refutation-Written	Silent Reading Examinations
Holistic Functional Silent Reading Strategies	Copying Language Experience Materials	Poster-Making	Visual/ Artistic Depiction	Question-Answer Silent Reading	Discussion Argumentative Silent Reading	Content/ Project-Centered Written Presentation

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